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the village Voice

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER DESIGNED TO BE READ

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Leading Novelist to Write A Column for 'The Voice'

by Edwin Fancher

Publisher of The Village Voice

Beginning with our next issue *The Village Voice* will have a weekly column contributed to our pages by Norman Mailer.

Mr. Mailer needs no introduction to most of our readers. At the age of 32 he has already had a most controversial career, and each of his three novels has received almost a total spectrum of praise and abuse. For your curiosity we quote these samples, inspired by "The Naked and the Dead":

"The greatest writer to come out of his generation"—Sinclair Lewis.

"Insidious slime"—*Life* magazine.

"Barbary Shore," Mailer's second novel, received perhaps the worst reception of any book by an important American novelist within anyone's memory. As an example, Sterling North wrote: "It is relatively rare to discover a novel whose obvious intention is to de-

buch as many readers as possible, mentally, morally, physically, and politically. . . . I presume the success of 'The Naked and the Dead' emboldened Norman Mailer to the point where he believed he could write and publish anything he wanted to. . . . When one has finished reading this evil-smelling novel one has an overwhelming urge to take a hot bath with very strong soap."

In Europe "Barbary Shore" was received more politely, and there were many reviews with careful praise in England, France, and Germany. One of the few American book reviewers to have a good word for it was Charles Rolo who wrote (in the *Atlantic*): "The new book has far stronger imaginative coloring, and it shows a remarkable advance in Mailer's writing."

His third novel, "The Deer Park," was in page proof and scheduled to be published in February 1955 when Stanley Rinehart, publisher of the first two novels, refused to proceed further with publication plans unless Mailer agreed to delete a passage of six lines. The six debatable lines took the author to six publishers before G. P. Putnam's Sons was willing to take a chance on the book. With its publication in October, "The Deer Park" received without question the most contradictory and confusing reviews of any novel in years. John K. Hutchens, writing in the daily *New York Herald Tribune*, said: "Presumably, 'The Deer Park' intends to say something about our time

Continued on page 2

Switch GVA Speakers

In a last-minute change of program, the Greenwich Village Association's incoming chairman, Philip T. Lombardo, announced Monday that next Tuesday evening's GVA speaker will be Edgar Lansing, of the Port of New York Authority, instead of Corrections Commissioner Anna M. Kross. Mr. Lansing's subject will be Greenwich Village and the Waterfront.

Two 30-pound roast pigs and other traditional native dishes will be the center of attraction at a colorful festival in a Village church hall on Friday.

The five-hour fiesta, sponsored by the Society of Christ the King (a non-sectarian society for the assistance of Puerto Ricans), will take place at St. Luke's Chapel, Hudson Street, and will include lively dancing to music by a Puerto Rican orchestra.

Bruce Mackenzie, Village spokesman for the society, told the *Voice*: "The festival is all part of the Puerto Ricans' 12 days of Christmas, and back home it goes on all day and night under the open sky. We've had to plan it indoors, of course, but most people will be coming in native costume and the festival will be as authentic as possible."

St. Luke's Chapel, which numbers about 50 Puerto Ricans among its congregation, holds a mass in Spanish each Sunday.

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RECTOR CALLS CHURCH CONTEST 'IMMORAL'

Hits ads in 'lewd' pulps

One year after first attacking a national church organization for sponsoring advertising in "sexy magazines," a Village clergyman is this week sending off 100 copies of a similar magazine—still carrying the ad—to Episcopal bishops throughout the country.

The Reverend Charles Howard Graf, Rector of St. John's church, told members of his congregation about the magazine during his sermon on Sunday.

"It is a so-called men's group magazine . . . full of salacious and pornographic material, unfit for children, young people, or anyone else . . . it is a burlesque show in print. At a matter of fact, its leading article is concerned with how to become a 'midway' queen. No church-connected agency would advertise in a burlesque



Taking with them skis, woolies, and high hopes for snow, a group of boys and girls from the Metropolitan New York Council for American Youth Hostels, 14 West 8th Street, board buses on a week-end trip.

Hiking, canoeing, camping, and the first favorite, biking, are among other activities of AYH members. Last Wednesday, the 21st birthday of the national organization was observed at reunion dinner at One Fifth Avenue with about 200 hostellers from all parts of the country present.

French Painter Who Shocked America Becomes U. S. Citizen

The man who painted one of the first paintings to shock the American critics and public became an American citizen on Fri-

day after living in this country from France shortly after his famous picture, "Nude Descending a Staircase," had rocked the critics at the 1913 Armory show. At the time—and for many years afterwards—he was one of the best-known exponents of the Dadaist movement whose artistic expression was nihilism.

Duchamp, who first applied for citizenship papers in 1947, spends most of his time these days in his West 14th Street skylight studio, compiling portfolios of reproductions of his work. The majority of his paintings—along with "Nude"—are on permanent display at the Philadelphia Museum.

James Johnson Sweeney, director of the Guggenheim Museum, and Alfred Barr, director of the Museum of Modern Art, had agreed to act as witnesses for the naturalization ceremony if necessary. Before the ceremony Duchamp, who is married to the former wife of the late Pierre Matisse (son of the famous Fauvist painter), told the *Voice*: "I think it is wonderful to be an American. I've lived here so much of my life that I wanted to be able to stay. Now it will always be my home."



—Victor Obsatz
MARCEL DUCHAMP

day after living in the Village for 13 years.

Gray-haired Marcel Duchamp, 67, who was sworn in at a private ceremony in the naturalization office at Columbus Avenue, first

Furriers over half a century
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—William Kahn
FATHER GRAF

theatre program, yet here we find in this men's magazine a full-page advertisement of the A. C. U. contest."

The A. C. U. to which Father Graf referred is the American Church Union, a body representing the Anglo-Catholic element in the Episcopal church, of which he was a board member until early in 1955. He resigned to protest its decision to raise funds by sponsoring a rebus-type puzzle contest advertised nationally in such magazines as *Confidential* and what he termed "other scandalous publications."

After Sunday's sermon the 42-year-old rector produced some of the magazines for reporters—*My Romance*, *Secret Confessions*, a magazine dated January, 1956 called *Challenge*, carrying a cover line headed "Is Your Sex Fetish Normal?" and the one to which he

Continued on page 12

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THE SPIDER'S HOUSE

By Paul Bowles. Random House, \$3.95.

by Arthur Oesterreicher

This is Bowles' third and most impressive novel. Its two leading characters—John Stenham, an expatriate American writer who may or may not be a mouthpiece for the author (one suspects he is), and Amar, an illiterate Arab boy descended from one of Islam's holy families—are confused spectators to Morocco's bloody three-way tug-of-war between the French, the nationalist Istiqlal

revolutionaries, and the Moslem traditionalists.

Save for a brief and intriguing glimpse of Moulay Ali, one of the Istiqlal leaders, the real moving forces of the story never appear on stage, and at the end the spectators disperse in a whirl of ambiguity and unresolved emotional conflicts. Stenham has no sympathy for the French; they are the bullying overlords of a land they fear and do not understand. But he hates the Istiqlal even more for their secularism, their worship of power, their Westernization. He would like to see Morocco left as it is: backward, mysterious, and beautiful. Amar, on the other hand, is left torn between his fondness for Stenham, who befriended him during the Istiqlal rioting, and his admiration for Moulay Ali. However, one gets the impression that he might someday join the terrorists, since at the book's end, Stenham abandons him.

Bowles' writing is careful and precise. He is a master at evoking sights and sounds. His most powerful characterizations are those of Arabs; Amar, especially, is totally believable and sympathetic, despite his savagery, cunning, and ignorance. In comparison, the Westerners are a dull and tepid lot: Stenham, who tends to be a trifle too maudlin and oversensitive, begins an affair of sorts with Lee Veyron, an almost too-beautiful American girl and a bright, talkative, sterile stereotype. Alain Moss, a wealthy English dilettante (who, for reasons which escape me, gets characterized in the publisher's blurb as "enigmatic") is a boring bore.

Stenham-Bowles' aesthete's eye view of Moroccan politics can be hard to take, in an age accustomed to thinking glibly in terms of "technologically backward areas." But Bowles the ar-

tist comes to the aid of Stenham-Bowles, the political pundit, with a deeply felt portrayal of Arab life which makes "The Spider's House" a well-written if not always convincing job.

FOURTEEN FOR TONIGHT

By Steve Allen. Henry Holt, \$3.50. by Howard Fertig

Steve Allen, of TV and radio fame, in this, his first collection of short stories, asks for our attention on a more serious basis, and I think deserves to win it. For he reveals both sympathy and concern—not the most common qualities in modern writers.

Several of the stories approach the most crucial of modern realities—estrangement, isolation, the every-day life bound between hatred and intimidation—and if they are somewhat blunted in the telling, they still remain forceful, honest, and meaningful.

But it is apparent at times how the superficial and the serious have merged, with sober matter the uneasy and impatient victim of an inappropriately glib form, as if one had to insure acceptance of the product by smart packaging.

In such stories as "The Sunday Morning Shift" (which is about a huckstering radio minister), "The Sidewalk" (a sustained practical joke in which a wise guy meets

QUICKLY

a column for slow readers

by NORMAN MAILER

MANY years ago I remember reading a piece in the newspapers by Ernest Hemingway and thinking: "What windy writing." That is the penalty for having a reputation as a writer. Any signed paragraph which appears in print is examined by the usual sadistic literary standards, rather than with the easy tolerance of a newspaper reader pleased to get an added fillip for his nickel.

But this is a fact of life which any professional writer soon learns to put up with, and I know that I will have to put up with it since I doubt very much if this column is going to be particularly well-written. That would take too much time, and it would be time spent in what is certainly a lost cause. Greenwich Village is one of the bitter provinces—it abounds in snobs and critics. That many of you are frustrated in your ambitions, and undernourished in your pleasures, only makes you more venomous. Quite rightly. If I found myself in your position, I would not be charitable either. Nevertheless, given your general animus to those more talented than yourselves, the only way I see myself becoming one of the cherished traditions of the Village is to be actively disliked each week.

At this point it can fairly be asked: "Is this your only reason for writing a column?" And the next best answer I suppose is: "Egotism. My search to discover in public how much of me is sheer egotism." I find a desire to inflict my casual opinions on a half-captive audience. If I did not,

there would always be the danger of putting these casual opinions into a new novel, and we all know what a terrible thing that is to do.

I also feel tempted to say that novelists are the only group of people who should write a column. Their interests are large, if shallow, their habits are sufficiently unreliable for them to find something new to say quite often, and in most other respects they are more columnistic than the columnists. Most of

us novelists who are any good are invariably half-educated; inaccurate, albeit brilliant upon occasion; insufferably vain of course; and—the indispensable requirement for a good newspaperman—as eager to tell a lie as the truth. (Saying the truth makes us burn with the desire to convince our audience, whereas telling a lie affords ample leisure to study the result.)

We good novelists also have the most unnewspaperly virtue of never praising fatherland and flag unless we are sick, tired, generally defeated, and want to turn a quick dishonest buck. Nobody but novelists would be asked to write columns if it were not for the sad fact that newspaper editors are professionally and obligatorily patriotic, and so never care to meet us. Indeed, even *The Village Voice*, which is remarkably conservative for so young a paper, and deeply patriotic about all community affairs, etc., etc., would not want me either if they were not so financially eager for free writing, and a successful name to go along with it, that they are ready to put up with almost anything. And I, as a minority stockholder in the *Voice* corporation, must agree that this paper does need something added to its general languor and whimsy.

At any rate, dear reader, we begin a collaboration which may go on for three weeks, three months, or, the Lord forbid, for three-and-thirty years. I have only one prayer—that I weary of you before you tire of me. And therefore, so soon as I learn to write columnese in a quarter of an hour instead of the unprofitable fifty-two minutes this has taken, we will all know better if our trifling business is going to continue. If it does, there is one chance in a hundred—make it a hundred-thousand—that I will become an habitual assassin-and-lover columnist who will have something superficial or vicious or inaccurate to say about many of the things under the sun, and who knows but what some of the night.

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LETTERS

Continued from page 4

one another—was sustained when I watched Lahr and Marshall a few nights ago. They gave that stasis the lift and simple poetry that Samuel Beckett garnishes bitterness with, or truth, and such is the business of creative spirit.

—Jack Selby
Bank Street

Caught the Impact

Dear Sir:

Jerry Tallmer did it again with "Godot." For my money, he was the only reviewer in all of New York who had any inkling of the drama he was seeing or caught any of the impact that Beckett dreamed up for us of this fifth decade of the twentieth century, A. D.

The uptown reviewers sounded like a council of sleepy Pozzos with \$9 dinners resting uneasily under their waistbands, angry and churlish at someone who had upset their digestion and spoiled what should have been a pleasant, comfortable evening.

Tallmer, I predict, will be the only reviewer in town who won't have to make an embarrassing about-face next spring when the best-play awards are voted, although I see that Watts of the Post and Atkinson of the Times have already begun shifting their feet about, looking for some place to hide their error.

—William Welborne
Spring Street

village calendar

WEDNESDAY (today): Student Concert, Dr. Frederic Kurzweil, NYU Education Auditorium, 8.30 p. m.; THURSDAY: Film, "The World Within," Grace Church School, 6.30 p. m.; Lecture, Dr. Eisig Silberschlag, Contemporary Hebrew Literature, NYU La Guardia Hall, 8 p. m.; Meeting, Woman's Auxiliary, St. Luke's Chapel, 8 p. m.; Play, "Bell, Book and Candle," Dragon Players of St. George's Church, Memorial House, 207 East 16th Street, 8.15 p. m.; Also Friday, May 4, same time; Talk, Basil Beyard, The Craft of a Documentary Film Writer, New School, 8.30 p. m.; FRIDAY: Forum discussion, Bernard Myers, The Return of the Recognizable Image, NYU Main Building, 8.15-10.15 p. m.; Discussion, Miss Manet Fowler, Negro-White Race Relations, Baha'i Club, 8.30 p. m.; Concert, Hillel and Aviva, Swapping Song Fair, Circle in the Square, midnight; SATURDAY: Track and Field Meet, Police Athletic League, Jas. J. Walker Memorial Park, Leroy and Hudson Streets, 10 a. m.; Songs of the South, Brownie McGhee, Sonny Terry, Rev. Garry Davis, Swapping Song Fair, Circle in the Square, midnight; SUNDAY: Rissa Presents: "The Ballad of the Sad Cafe," and other stories by Carson McCullers, Cafe Demitasse, 4 p. m.; MONDAY: Talk, McLean McLean, GV Chapter of the United World Federalists, Pen and Brush Club, 8.15 p. m.; TUESDAY: Annual Spring Fiesta, Chelsea Citizens Committee, P. S. 33, 1.30 p. m.; Meeting, Men's Club of St. John's Church, Rectory, 8 p. m.

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THE HIP AND THE SQUARE

by NORMAN MAILER

I HAVE not seen "Waiting for Godot" nor read the text, but of course I have come across a good many reviews of it, and heard more than a little in its favor and disfavor. What amuses me is the deference with which everyone is approaching Beckett, and the fault of course, the part which is sad, is that none of the celebrators of Beckett have learned anything from Joyce (for whom Beckett worked as a secretary). By this I do not mean that one has to read all of Joyce to understand the style of Joyce's mind and the dialectical beauties of his spirit. But so far, it has been mainly the academicians who have attempted to grapple with the Hip intricacies of Joyce's mysticism of the flesh as it suffered and was multilated and elaborated against the social anvil of Christianity.

Nor do I mean that I am an expert on Joyce—like many of you who will read this, I have read perhaps half of "Ulysses" and fragments from "Finnegan's Wake"—but then it is not necessary to read all of Joyce in order to feel or not feel the meaning of his language and the reach of his genius. He is after all the only genius of the twentieth century who has written in the English language.

But at the very least, the critics could have done a little rudimentary investigation into the meaning of the title of "Waiting for Godot," and the best they have been able to come up with so far is that Godot has something to do with God. My congratulations. But Godot also means 'ot Dog, or the dog who is hot, and it means God-O, God as the female principle, just as Daddy-O in Hip means the father who has failed, the man who has become an O, a vagina. Two obvious dialectical transpositions on "Waiting for Godot" are To Dog The Coming, and God Hot for Waiting, but anyone who has the Joycean habit of thought could add a hundred subsidiary themes. As for example on Go, Dough! (Go, Life!)

Nonetheless, I like To Dog The Coming as the best, because what I smell in all of this is that "Waiting for Godot" is a poem to impotence, and I suspect (again out of the ignorance of not having seen it) that Beckett sees man as hopelessly impotent, and the human condition as equally impotent. Given the caliber of the people who have applauded "Waiting for Godot," I further suspect that the complex structures of the play and its view of life, are most attractive to those who are most impotent. So I doubt if I will like it, because finally not everyone is impotent, nor is our final fate, our human condition, necessarily doomed to impotence, as old Joyce knew, and Beckett I suspect does not. When it comes to calling a work great one must first live with the incommensurable nuance of the potent major key and the impotent minor key.

Now, to make a most brutal transition, nearly all of the rest of this column is deeply depressing for me to write:

The Nuisances of Growth

ERRORS in type-setting and proof-reading fall into two categories—those which are obvious mis-spellings, and those (more serious and more interesting psychologically) where a word is left out or changed into another, and the meaning of the sentence thereby becomes altered. Yet the reader never knows that an error was made.

Last week a classic of this sort occurred. Writing about Hip, part of my final sentence was supposed to read:

... because Hip is not totally negative, and has a view of life which is predicated on growth and the nuances of growth, I intend to continue writing about it . . .

As it appeared in The Voice, it read:

... because Hip is not totally negative, and has a view of life which is predicated on growth and the nuisances of growth, I intend to continue writing about it . . .

In the four months I have been writing this column, similar (for me) grievous errors have cropped up in all but two of the pieces I have written, and these errors have made for steadily increasing friction between the Editor, an Associate Editor, and myself. Since no cliché is more true than that there are two sides to every story, the Editor and Associate Editor, who are hard-working gentlemen, claimed that the fault was due to the fact that I am in the habit of turning in my column at the last minute, which undeniably increases their difficulties.

At any rate, we all had some words, some fairly sharp words, certain things were said which can hardly be unsaid, and the result is that this is to be my last column for The Voice—at least under its present policy.

Now, the quarrel was actually trivial, and I can take most of the blame for the way it went, but as happens so often, we were all of us at bottom arguing about something

else—a much more serious difference of opinion which I have had with the Editor and Publisher.

They wish this newspaper to be more conservative, more Square—I wish it to be more Hip. We have compromised our differences for many weeks as best we could, and The Voice has perhaps suffered from the compromise. But, at present, since I am a minority stockholder and have no real voice in the control of anything except my column, I have decided that this contradictory association can go on no longer. If the paper is to become anything at all, it is necessary that I step out, for too many energies are being wasted in internal disputes. (Let me add that these disputes were not about my column. Although the Editor and Publisher agreed with very little in it, they allowed or submitted to a most rare freedom of the press.)

For those of you who are Hip and wish The Voice to be a Hip newspaper (which would make it the first in New York) I think I ought to add that the Editor and Publisher are very responsive to their reader's opinions, and if you make yourself heard, this newspaper will reflect your influence. If you do not, then the Editor and Publisher will prove to have been right—to have made a better objective estimate of the situation and of what interests readers—and so the fortunes of this newspaper will prosper more without me than with me. Perhaps there is room in Greenwich Village for two community newspapers—which has been their contention all along.

At any rate, this is a farewell column, and I for one am sorry it had to come to an end so abruptly. We may not have had the most pleasant of relationships, but it has been stimulating for me, and perhaps stimulating for some of you. I regret only that it became impossible to go on writing about the nature of The Hip and the Square, for that was fascinating to me, and I had finally found the subject (yes, after all these columns) which I wished to explore. So, regrettably, good-bye for awhile. I wonder in which form some of us will swing into communication again.

Encore

As a last fillip, I would like to print here the only poem I have ever written, a poem about potency and impotence (as well as other things), which is called "The Drunk's Bebop and Chowder," and appeared in my novel, "The Deer Park." Let us see how many typos there are in this. If there aren't too many, try reading it aloud.

Shirred at the inlecherent felloine namelled Shash
Head tea technocerous hero calmed Asshy

Befwen hes prunt cuddlenot riles fora lash
Whenfrir hir cunck woodled lyars affordelay?

"Yi munt seech tyt und speets tytsh"
"I-uh wost tease toty ant tweeks tlotty"

"And/or atuftit n pladease slit,"
"N ranty off itty indisplacent,"

"Frince Yrhome washt balostilted ina laydy."
"Sinfur her romesnot was lowbilt inarouter dayly."

Midi Garth, modern dancer:

Her Goal—to Do What Was Never, Ever, Done Before

by Ivan C. Karp

"What inspires a dance?" I asked. "Where does it come from? How does it start?"

Midi Garth answered me in a quiet, musical voice. She was alone in her studio, preparing for a program of original dances to be given with a small company this Saturday evening at 8.40 in the Kaufmann Concert Hall of the 92nd Street YM-YWHA.

"For me, most of them begin with a simple movement," she said, offering a chair. "I build the dance by innovating around that initial impulse until a fluid connection is made. The completed work has definite individual structure, but it doesn't actually exist until it is performed. A performance jells it. It gives it enduring shape."

"Then your work is a personal philosophy; it's not based on a particular musical composition or a familiar literary idea?"

Must Not Dominate

"No, not always. I've found inspiration in music, and sometimes in my own thoughts, or in a poem, or in just a phrase. I have built dances around single images from Rimbaud or Bau-



—Val Telberg

MIDI GARTH

daire. But I try to keep away from formal dance drama. The 'story' must not dominate. I prefer to have the audience find its own meanings."

"Aren't there certain decisive movements that summon up the

Continued on page 10

the village Voice

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Site and Foresight

At last week's Greenwich Village Association meeting there was much enthusiasm for replacing the Women's House of Detention, once that building is abandoned by the Department of Correction, with a cultural-and-civic center. The only note of opposition came from those several people who felt that with the dearth of middle-income housing in this area, the site should be developed for such purposes.

One of the main arguments in favor of a cultural center is of course that Greenwich Village has always been the spawning ground of the arts in America, and is today a more vigorous focus of creativity, in painting, in writing, in the drama, than ever before. The center would further support and stimulate this activity. A well-designed centrally located theatre would increase the strength and stature of the entire Village-East Side theatre belt, now the second largest theatre district in the United States (and better than second, some would say, in importance). A new large gallery would compensate for the loss of the Whitney Museum and a number of private galleries to "uptown." Facilities for music and the dance would encourage these arts, and so on. All this is to the good, as are the complementary proposals for such civic accommodations as a library, a police station, meeting rooms, teen-age recreation rooms, commercial office space, a public garage. But while endorsing the project and urging direct, vigorous work on the practical means of achieving it, we also want to call attention to something else that influences the artist, and many other citizens, in Greenwich Village.

Exactly what made the Village attractive to creative people is difficult to say, but certainly a part of the answer lies in the local color, the shapes and styles of the buildings and streets, the sense of quiet and retreat from the grasping, bulging, rushing city, the social diversity and calm neighborliness of those who live here—and the low rents. Artists of all kinds, and especially young ones, are traditionally poor, and the low rents of brownstones and "tenement" areas are more crucial than the atmosphere—witness the migration of many young artists this past decade to the Lower East Side or up to Chelsea. Nor is that all. New legislation requires the structural improvement of many of the older buildings, and many of them will now simply come down to make way for high-rent apartments. Rents will be raised in those that remain. We must face up to a decrease, not an increase, in low-rent and middle-income housing in the Village in the near future. Even as we plan our new cultural center we must keep in mind the need to preserve the unique architectural character and the human (and humane) diversity that have favored the creative process in our midst. If the Village is to continue to be The Village, the plans for a cultural center must be accompanied by sound planning in housing for all its residents.

5c The Press of Freedom

The Spoilers

ANYONE who has worked in a government office knows that editing can become a vice like drinking, smoking, eating, gambling, and a number of others. Each thing can be said in five trillion ways (some obliging college professor will at once get in touch with me and give me the exact result of his 23 years of calculations), and when two, three, or more people work together on a piece, the result usually is that the finished product resembles the worst of each individual.

Now of course in a factual piece this is an excellent idea, but even there one must go easy. Nobody really knows what will emasculate a phrase. Shorten them all according to an arbitrary standard, and lengthen those that seem too short and abrupt, and you will discover that you have changed the age of the author: he may have been a young man when he first wrote it; he is now a doddering old gentleman like those who, from

behind a newspaper in the University Club, look down with contempt upon us poor mortals. Or add a few touches of your own to a piece that may seem a little too dry, and you will have transformed your man into a lady with so many flowers on her hat.

IN THE realm of words, as in many others, there are various functions to be performed, and to them correspond various activities, variously titled. There are those who put words away into dictionaries, try to keep them clean and up to date, and they are the best servants of a language. When the writers come home they are pleased to find everything in good order. But then there are those who give birth to words and feed them; and to these the words go as to an old friend who, in the darkest or driest of moods, will find a god that makes him rise and speak.

—Niccolo Tucci

LETTERS

Nothing Left

Dear Sir:

Without Norman Mailer there is no Village Voice.

—Penny Funt
East 10th Street

Voter

This is to say that I am for a more Hip newspaper.

—Ben Newman
Washington Place

Small Town

Dear Sir:

Man, you goofed—but really goofed. You will feature articles written by Yahoo the Yak and newsy items concerning the Schmidlapps' daughter Sophronia spending a week's vacation home from Schlepp State Teachers College. But The Village Voice without Mailer is merely a small-town newspaper with amusing pretensions.

—Joan Lorraine Smith
Bedford Street

Richer

Dear Sir:

The Voice is richer for the loss of the castrated bellow of N. Mailer. That the author of "Naked and the Dead" deteriorated to a point where he wrote such undisciplined gibberish is pitiful.

Once I was a Mailer admirer. Now I feel like putting a quarter in his tin cup and saying a prayer over his departed literary genius.

—A. Kent MacDougal
West 112th Street

Compromise?

Dear Sir:

The Square in me realizes that The Village Voice is a commercial enterprise, that it wants not to lose either advertisers or postal privileges, that it seeks to provoke no boycott by those who are too square to even read about Hip.

But the Hip in me wants to continue reading Mailer. Cannot this dilemma be compromised without being too compromising?

Perhaps, just as you now have a 5-cent Village Edition and a 10-cent City Edition, you can put out a Hip Edition and also a Square Edition. I figure 4 cents for the Square Edition (that being the going price for Square newspapers in this town) and 25 cents for the Hip Edition would be about right.

Of course, Mailer may get too Hip for the mails, in which case you can tell us where we may sink in the dark of night, rap three times, give the password, and ask for Norman.

On the other hand, even a super-Hipster may some day realize that the measure of greatness in Hip is the ability to bring

A NICE and knowledgeable guy I know said to me a few days ago: "For six years my family and I have had a date every week with Mama." (The TV show, he was talking about.) "Now it's going off the air. What ought I do? Write to the station?"

I said No.

No one has ever been so much surprised since the man asked Lou Holtz for the correct time and Lou replied: "Drop dead."

I had to explain.

I did and I do.

This Mama show has been superior stuff from the start. Moreover, it held up. It's fifty times better than most of its rivals. But if my friend was telling the truth—and if I calculate fairly well—he and his family had given 120 of their lives to Mama—and that, we figured, is the equivalent of reading "War and Peace" ten times over if you're a quick study.

My intelligent and highly selective pal has become, in fact, a slave to recurrence. Familiarity always breeds friendliness and rubs down the fine critical edge. It's nothing against the show to say that some 240 episodes in the lives of the characters are enough.

For a lady . . .

There must have been several thousand episodes in the lives of the rising Goldbergs in radio, and a hundred at least in television. That, too, was a remarkable show, and the reason I mention it is to pay, for perhaps the fifteenth time, a little tribute to Mrs. Gertrude Berg, who originated, wrote, and played in the series, and who a few nights ago appeared in a TV play called "Paris and Mrs. Perlman," by John Vlahos. (Alcoa Hour, NBC, Producers' Showcase, directed by Robert Finkel, produced by Herbert Brodkin—and Claude Dauphin six and a half times as good as he is in "Janus.")

... who deserves . . .

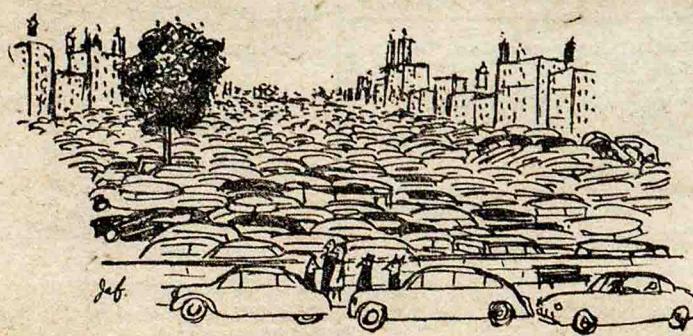
I note all these credits because it was more than a creditable hour. Mrs. Berg has a special facility, which has never failed, of making everyone who plays on the same stage with her play beautifully. In a pleasant comedy, with a few undertones, there weren't more than two minutes that seemed forced. Always the compendium of all that's right, Mrs. Berg moved through the show superbly. I know I laughed. It is quite possible I had tears in my eyes. I don't react that way to most things.

... her holiday

Some years ago I was at some kind of party and Phil Baker (who was then running the progenitor of "The \$64,000 Question") suddenly turned to Mrs. Berg and said: "So why did you come on the program?" and she replied: "I came for the pencil" (Eversharp was the sponsor). And with that for a beginning they went on, Baker playing straight and Mrs. Berg explaining and explaining, bringing in the history of her entire imaginary family, including the two sisters who had died in childhood, with a quick and confident flow that was as imaginative as any impromptu I had ever heard. It didn't surprise me to know that she used to come in to rehearsals of "The Goldbergs," ask if the script was short, and then, in five minutes before airtime, improvise exactly what was needed. And you never knew.

A great woman. She fought hard for Phil Loeb, too, who used to play Jake and was blacklisted and died all too soon. Today's paper says she's off for a holiday. She deserves a lovely one.

Continued on page 5



Central Park, 1966

'Threepenny'—a Show with a Future as Big as Its Past

by John Wilcock

[Second of two articles. The first article appeared last week.]

With a string of stage successes behind him and one, "Lost in the Stars," still running on Broadway, composer Kurt Weill died on April 3, 1950, one month after his 50th birthday.

It was some of his sentimental melodies, "Speak Low," for example, and "September Song," that had brought him his fame, but by many older critics he had actually been regarded as a sort of contemporary Mozart as a result of his "Threepenny Opera," based largely on John Gay's eighteenth-century "Beggar's Opera" and written in conjunction with poet Bertolt Brecht back in 1928.

Swept Across Europe

Its original production in Berlin had been a tremendous hit and its main song, "Moritat," swept across Europe on the lips of newsboys, barmaids, and other traditional taste-spreaders. The music was so popular, in fact, that Hitler went to special trouble to try to degrade it. Setting aside a special room in what he designated "The Museum of Degenerate Music," he pumped into it the music of such non-Nazis as Weill, Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Schoenberg. The Nazis expected the public to scoff, but even with constant repetition music doesn't necessarily outstay its welcome (as any devotee of Muzak will testify) and eventually the museum was closed.

Weill, however, had already left the country with his red-haired wife, Lotte Lenya, who had starred

in the Berlin production, and by the time he arrived in New York, after brief spells in Paris and London, "Threepenny" had preceded him, only to flop after 13 performances on Broadway.

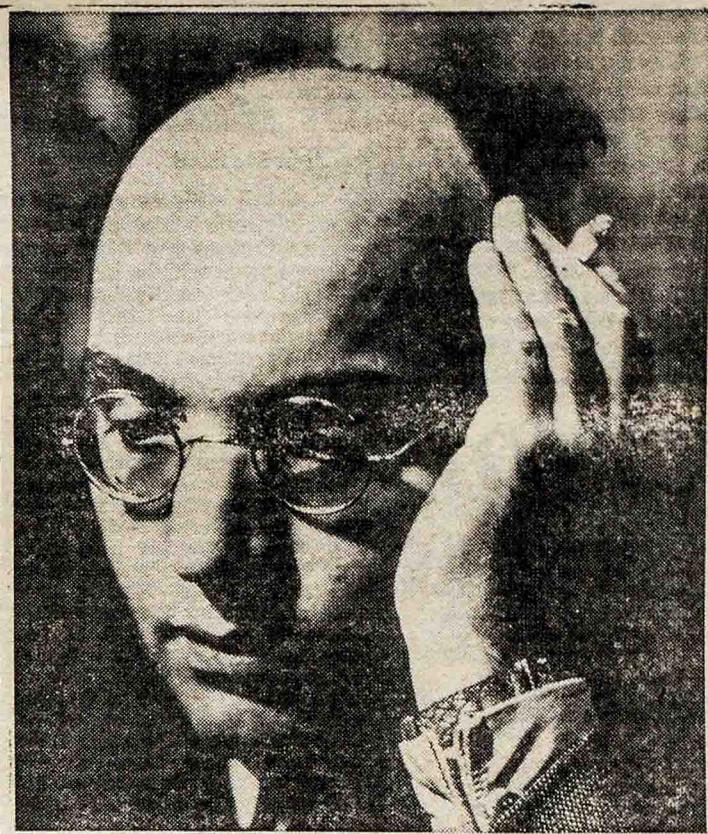
In the next 10 years or so he showed no great enthusiasm for having it revived, and he threw his energies into writing other shows—"One Touch of Venus," "Street Scene," and "Down in the Valley"—while his wife had a brief dramatic career and then retired.

It wasn't until after Weill's death that his long-time friend, composer Marc Blitzstein, turned out a satisfactory translation and adaptation of the 1928 hit, and one performance of this was presented at Brandeis University in 1952, to the immense satisfaction of everyone concerned.

Didn't Change A Note

"One of my most important criteria has always been not to meddle," he says, "and although I translated the lyrics, shifted some of them, and pruned some of the show, which originally ran to something more than three hours—the capacity of Berlin audiences was considerably more than that of present-day Americans—I didn't change a note or an orchestration. The music remains exactly the same and I am glad that what for me was a labor of love turned out to be so successful."

The year after the Brandeis try-out, Carmen Capalbo and Stanley Chase, two young story editors at CBS, acquired a lease on the 300-seat Theatre de Lys on Christopher Street, and began looking around for a show to put on. Villager Capalbo, long familiar with the "Threepenny Opera" score, heard about the new adaptation and, after several weeks of frustration, managed to persuade Blitzstein to let the pair produce it. Neither of them had tackled a major production before, but Capalbo's experience probably



KURT WEILL

LETTERS

Continued from page 4

the Square around to a Hip point of view. This is not necessarily best accomplished by shock treatments, but rather by a bit of subtlety. When a man comes up with a truly important idea, he no longer needs to march naked through Times Square in order to attract attention to himself.

Roy Lindberg
Third Avenue, Brooklyn

Indicative

Dear Sir:

The type, "nuisances of growth," was fairly indicative of what happened. It is one of the nuisances of growth that would lead you to question the value of his column. You are in danger of becoming a success, so you panic at the thought of not being another stale formula. You would be well advised to ask yourself: Why is the paper becoming successful?

Rest assured, the predictability of your other pages more than balance anything fresh or stimulating that Mr. Mailer or Mr. Tucci may dream up. If you don't like that kind of thought and writing, why don't you give them the paper and take a job on Madison Avenue, where you would probably feel more at home and make as much money, too?

—Maxwell Kenton
West 23rd Street

Another Compromise

Dear Sir:

Thought Norman Mailer's column quite bad, but he does have beautiful curly. How about compromising and continuing to print his picture only?

—(Miss) Leslie Stuart
Horatio Street

When Chips Were Down

Dear Sir:

To Mr. Mailer:

Let me say I am extremely sorry your May 2-column is your final one. In all your columns, while some were so damned aggravating (and why shouldn't they have been), what you did say, in essence, when the decorations were dismissed, and when the chips were down, was true and truly strong and original to read. Sincerely,

—Joe Jensen,
Bank Street

like to film "Threepenny," but Warner Brothers' German subsidiary did this back in the 30's and Warners still retains the rights and appears unlikely to release them.

As of last week, however, all these matters seemed to be well in the future. The current production looked as though it was going to run for ever—seats are selling for five weeks ahead—and the more pressing problem was to initiate new members of the cast to replace actors and actresses leaving for other shows. A major change was the installation of German actress Grete Mosheim in the role of Jenny. With her second husband, novelist George Davis, Lotte Lenya is now leaving for Germany, where she'll record the complete score of another of Weill's old shows, "Mahagonny."

On the next to last night of her run, I called backstage to see her and she seemed sad to be leaving and nostalgic about earlier days. "Since I took over my old role here last year," she said, "I must have had visits or messages from thousands—tens of thousands—of people who swear to me that they were at my opening night in Berlin, in 1928."

"Well, I'm sure they must have been there if they say so, but I do remember that the theatre where 'Die Dreigroschenoper' first opened only held 800 people. Sometimes my nice visitors make me feel that everybody in the world was at my first opening night."

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Says Capalbo: "There were two rather obvious choices for the role of Jenny; one was Marlene Dietrich, who apparently was interested, and the other was Lotte Lenya, who'd played the part originally. We felt we just had to have Lenya, and although she maintained she was too old for the part, eventually we talked her into it."

Casting for "The Threepenny Opera," with Capalbo directing, began early in 1954.

Two Obvious Choices

That's why the circus holds such an appeal: it's the nearest thing to life. It's unpredictable but it's also inevitable. The element of danger is enough to keep everyone keyed up."

The young production team hasn't decided what it will tackle next—they've had plenty of offers, of course—but Capalbo says he thinks he'd like to stick with off-Broadway for a while. He'd also

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ADVERTISER'S NOTE

While I was writing my column, I deliberately held many things back, because I wished to communicate with as many people as possible, and I felt I was doing The Voice a disservice every time I discussed subjects which were disproportionately difficult for a newspaper reader in a hurry. But this is an advertisement, and so I owe The Voice nothing here—on the contrary I decided to pay my money rather than embarrass editorial caution by asking it to be printed otherwise.

The topic of "Waiting for Godot" which concerns most of this piece will have interest for perhaps a tenth of The Voice's readers, and perhaps one in a hundred will feel sufficiently concerned and interested to follow me through to the end.

N. M.

It is never particularly pleasant for me to apologize, and in the present circumstances I loathe doing so. To announce a farewell appearance and then be on the scene again the following week is to ooze all the ebbing charm and reeking sweat of the desperate old actor or the failing middle-aged bullfighter who simply cannot let go, cannot disappear, even if it is for no more than to hear some new catcalls, and conceivably get gored.

Since I have my pride, I would have preferred to keep my word and not appear again in this newspaper unless and until its general policy would change. But I have a duty to my honesty as well, and I did something of which I am ashamed, and so must apologize in the hardest but most meaningful way:—by public advertisement.

I am referring of course to what I wrote about "Waiting for Godot" in my last column. Some of you may remember that I said Beckett's play was a poem to impotence and appealed precisely to those who were most impotent. Since then I have read the play, seen the present Broadway production, read the play again, have thought about it, wrestled with its obscurities (and my conscience), and have had to come up reluctantly with the conviction that I was most unfair to Beckett. Because "Waiting for Godot" is a play about impotence rather than an ode to it, and while its view of life is indeed hopeless, it is an art work, and therefore, I believe, a good. While I still think it is essentially the work of a minor artist because its range of life-experience is narrow if deep (reading the play is like listening to jazz so cool that even Lennie Tristano might mutter: "Too much"), it is all the same, whether major or minor, the work of a man who has conscientiously and with great purity made the uncompromising effort to abstract his view of life into an art work, no matter how unbearable that view of life may be. It is bad enough and sad enough when the critics of any given time attack an artist and fail to understand him, but then this is virtually to be taken for granted. For one artist to attack another, however, and to do it on impulse, is a crime, and for the first time in months I have been walking around with a very clear sense of guilt.

Oddly enough, in superficial ways, and without reading "Godot," I was on the target in what I wrote last week. As I type this now—it is Sunday—there is an interview with Samuel Beckett in the Times drama section written by Israel Shenker, and I wish to quote from it. Beckett says at one point:

"The kind of work I do is one in which I'm not master of my material. The more Joyce knew the more he could. He's tending toward omniscience and omnipotence as an artist. I'm working with impotence, ignorance. I don't think impotence has been exploited in the past. There seems to be a kind of aesthetic axiom that expression is an achievement—must be an achievement. My little exploration is that whole zone of being that has always been set aside by artists as something un-

useable—as something by definition incompatible with art.

"I think anyone nowadays who pays the slightest attention to his own experience finds it the experience of a non-knower, a non-caner (somebody who cannot). The other type of artist—the Apollonian—is absolutely foreign to me."

Fair enough and honest enough—it elicits one's respect. What still distresses me and distresses Beckett as well, I would guess, is that "Godot" has become the latest touchstone in social chi-chi, and people who don't have the faintest idea of what he is talking



NORMAN MAILER

about, and who as they watch the play, scream and gurgle and expire with a kind of militant exacerbated snobbery, are exactly the majority of people who have promoted "Godot" here. Because not to like "Waiting for Godot" is to suffer damnation—one is no longer chic.

(As a long parenthesis, I must add that it is impossible to understand the play without reading it, because the present production is in my opinion abominable, insensitive, hammy, sentimental, and pretentious in every wrong way—the acting is equally misleading. Only Alvin Epstein who plays Lucky gives an exciting and illuminating performance—the other actors merely flatten characterization into caricature.)

Most of the present admirers of "Godot" are, I believe, snobs, intellectual snobs of undue ambition and impotent imagination, the worst sort of literary type, invariably more interested in being part of some intellectual elite than in the creative act itself. This combination almost always coincides with a sex-hater, for if one is ashamed of sex or is unhappy with sex, then the next best thing is to rise in the social world. But since people with poor sexual range seldom have the energy and the courage to rise imaginatively or defiantly, they obligatorily give themselves to the escalator of the snob which is slow but ultimately sure of some limited social ascension.

And for these reasons I assumed in advance that "Godot" was essentially and deeply anti-sexual, and I was wrong. It has almost no sexual hope within it, but that is its lament, that is Beckett's grief, and the comic tenderness of the story comes from the resignation of that grief. So far as it is a story, it is a sad little story, but told purely.

Two men, two vagabonds, named Vladimir and Estragon (Didi and Gogo), a male and female homosexual, old and exhausted, have come to rest temporarily on a timeless plain, presided over by a withered cross-like tree, marooned in the purgatory of their failing powers. Their memories have become uncertain as vapors, their spirits are broken, they cannot even love each other any longer, they can only bicker and weep and nag and sulk and sleep, they are beyond sex, really neither old men nor old women but debilitated children looking for God, looking for the Life-Giver. They are so desperate they even speak wanly of hanging themselves, because

this at least will give them one last erection. But they have not the power to commit suicide, they are exhausted and addled by the frustration of their failures to the point where they cannot even commit a despairing action. They can only wait for Godot, and they speculate feebly about his nature, for Godot is a mystery to them, and after all they desire not only sex and rebirth into life, but worldly power as well. They are looking for the potency of the phallus and the testes. Vladimir speaks of the Saviour and the Two Thieves, and how one of the thieves was saved. The implication is that since he and Gogo are withered puff-balls, balls blown passively through life, opportunistic and aimless as small thieves, perhaps one of them and only one may be saved, and he is tempted: perhaps he is the one. Which would be of course at the expense of his life-mate Gogo. So in the religious sense he is not even pure in his despair, but is already tempted into Sin.

Enter Pozzo and Lucky: Pozzo the fat gentleman with the whip and the rope around the neck of Lucky his slave, his wretch, the being at the mercy of his will. Pozzo dominates Lucky, abuses him, commands him about like a cruel brain abusing its own body.

And Vladimir has his opportunity for action, he can rescue Lucky, indeed he protests at the treatment of Lucky. But Vladimir, like Gogo, is seduced by the worldly power of Pozzo, and finally the two vagabonds collaborate in torturing Lucky, or at the very least in aiding Pozzo to beat Lucky into unconsciousness at the end of his single impassioned speech (to which indeed we will return).

Thereafter, the action (what there is of it) descends, and when Pozzo and Lucky reappear, Pozzo is blind and Lucky is dumb—we will hear his wisdom no longer. Their condition is even more debased, that as the human condition in the world is to strive, no matter how cruelly, to rise to the top, so life and strength come from adoring the bottom for that is where God conceals himself.

Now, I had hoped originally to trace some of the meanings of the play through the text, but that would be endless, since along with everything else, "Waiting for Godot" is a fascinating puzzle, part conscious, part unconscious, as is all work influenced by Joyce. And there are clues and clues within the clues: Vauclusé (vos clues) and Mercéduse for the Broadway production just as Macon (ma con) and Cackon are in the text—the opposite lands of female sex and anality, the spirit of the flesh and the earth of power, and so on. For example, still another meaning of the word "Godot" given that "ot" is a diminutive in French (as for example Pierrot from Pierrot) is that "Godot" is simply an English-French diminutive of God, the child-God, the Christ. And one could indeed go on forever, because the meanings can be excavated, they are not merely tricks, and the structure of the play is mathematical in its repeating, parallel, and altering relationships and symbolisms. It is an enormous inward psychic exploration by Beckett, who significantly mentions only one philosopher's name in the work, to wit, Bishop Berkeley. Berkeley, however, is the philosopher to whom the mysticism of Hip can be traced most directly. From Berkeley's elaboration of the argument that God exists because the world is no more than the imaginative construction of a Mind, and that Mind in its total infinite existence is God, it is but a step, or rather a dialectical inversion to the underlying lyric of Hip, its sensual mysticism that God is a Body, one's own Body, and so our feelings, our emotions, our pleasures, in short the life of our bodies, is capable—if one can only pursue it—of infinite extension inward. One can always dig something beyond what was dug yesterday. (As a necessary parenthesis, since I cannot begin to go into Hip, Hip is also the search for power—one digs into the earth, into the faeces, into the body, one digs for power itself—one learns in order to wield power which of course is one of the great moral questions which Hip if it grows will present ultimately, since Hip is a nihilism whose end is power. Good power perhaps.)

But to return to "Waiting for Godot." Lucky, the tortured slave, gives his idiot's speech in the first act. It is the one strangled cry of active meaning in the whole play, a desperate retching pell-mell of broken thoughts and intuitive lunges into the nature of man, sex, God, and time, it comes from a slave, a wretch, who is closer to the divine than any of

the other characters, it is a cry across the abyss from impotence to Apollo (Dionysus is indeed quite beyond the horizon) and Pozzo, Gogo and Didi answer the cry by beating Lucky into unconsciousness. Thereafter, Lucky—the voice, the midwife, to the rebirth of the others—is stricken dumb, for he too suffers from failing powers, he too is overcome by the succession of his defeats and so brought closer to death. Later, much later, at the end of the play, Vladimir talks to the boy who brings the message that Godot will not come that day, and as Vladimir questions him about Godot, the boy says that Godot has a white beard. But Lucky, who has a head of white hair, had begun his speech (which again is the intellectual lock and key of the play) by talking of "a personal God quaquaquaqua with white beard . . ." exactly the speech which the others had destroyed. So Vladimir has a moment of agony: "Christ have mercy on us!" he says to the boy. Through vanity, through cupidity, through indifference, through snobbery itself, Vladimir and Gogo have lost the opportunity to find Godot—they have abused the link which is Lucky. (I must say that I am not altogether unconvinced that Lucky himself may be Godot—it is, at the least, a possibility.) At any rate, Vladimir and Gogo have failed still again, their condition is even more desperate, and so the play ends. "Yes, let's go," says Gogo in the final line, but Beckett follows with the stage direction: "They do not move. Curtain."

It is possible that consciously or unconsciously Beckett is restating the moral and sexual basis of Christianity which was lost with Christ—that one finds life by kissing the feet of the poor, by giving of oneself to the most debased corners of the most degraded, that as the human condition in the world is to strive, no matter how cruelly, to rise to the top, so life and strength come from adoring the bottom for that is where God conceals himself.

Yet, there is another and richer possibility. For I believe Beckett is also saying, again consciously or unconsciously, that God's destiny is flesh and blood with ours, and so, far from conceiving of a God who sits in judgment and allows souls, lost souls, to leave purgatory and be reborn again, there is the greater agony of God at the mercy



SAMUEL BECKETT

of man's fate. God determined by man's efforts, man who has free will and can no longer exercise it and God therefore in bondage to the result of man's efforts. At the end, Vladimir and Gogo having failed again, there is the hint, the murmur, that God's condition is also worse, and he too has come closer to failure—when Vladimir asks the boy in the closing minutes of the play what Godot does, the boy answers: "He does nothing, Sir." Godot, by implication, lives in the same condition, the same

spiritual insomnia, agony, limbo, the same despair of one's fading powers which has hung over the play.

As a description of the nadir of the twentieth century, the play whether destined to be prophetic or a curiosity is at least the pure end of a tendency—its total lack of hope is salutary if one demands that art works be salutary, for like the notorious black canvas of Clifford Still which was hung at the Museum of Modern Art in the 15 Modern Americans show a few years ago, the end of a particular road has been reached, indeed the tendency has been accelerated by the artist, and so once again time has been accelerated by the artist (for perhaps the most intense and dedicated of the artist's purposes is to accelerate historical time itself.) The velocity of history is made by the rate of increase of human consciousness, PROVIDED that consciousness can express itself in action and so alter society. (For where consciousness cannot be supported by the courage to make one's action, then consciousness lapses into despair and death.)

Beckett's work brings our despair to the surface, it nourishes it with air, and therefore alters it, for the despair of the 20th century is that man's consciousness has increased at an incredible rate and yet his capacity to alter history, to make change, has never been more impotent. So the last ten years have been part of the vast cramp of our history, that cramp which will reduce us all to angry impotence (otherwise known as false sweetness) or cowardly passivity (the passivity of the creep who absorbs and does not give back) that cramp which will finally destroy Will and Consciousness and Courage and leave us in the fog of failing memory, expiring desire, and the vocation for death.

But I wonder if we have not passed through the bottom of the nadir already. I know that for myself, after years of the most intense pessimism, I feel the hints, the clues, the whispers of a new time coming. There is a universal rebellion in the air, and the power of the two colossal super-states may be, yes, may just be ebbing, may be failing in energy even more rapidly than we are failing in energy, and if that is so, then the destructive, the liberating, the creative nihilism of the Hip, the frantic search for potent Change may break into the open with all its violence, its confusion, its ugliness and horror, and yet like all Change, the violence is better without than within, better as individual actions than as the collective murders of society, and if we have courage enough, there is beauty beneath, for the only revolution which will be meaningful and natural for the 20th Century will be the sexual revolution one senses everywhere, everywhere from the cheapest television comedian straining at his dirty leash to the mysterious and exciting phenomenon of the White South terrified of the Birmingham bus strike and the growing power of the Negro,—everywhere, including the comic feminization of what had been once the iron commissars of the Soviet super-state.

Man's nature, man's dignity, is that he acts, lives, loves, and finally destroys himself seeking to penetrate the mystery of existence, and unless we partake in some way, as some part of this human exploration (and war) then we are no more than the pimps of society and the betrayers of our Self.

—Norman Mailer

10 CENTS

the village Voice

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF GREENWICH VILLAGE

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Vol. V, No. 29 • New York, N.Y. • Wednesday, May 11, 1960



Voice: Gin Briggs



A FINE MAY AFTERNOON in City Hall Park brought out a cross-section of New Yorkers to protest the May 3 air-raid alert. Catholic Workers DOROTHY DAY and AMMON HENNACY (at left, top center picture), old hands at refusing to take cover, again remained above ground. Both had previously served jail sentences for similar offenses. MRS. MARY SHARMAT (top, left), a former New Hampshire Republican, now a New York resident, helped shepherd the children, including one of her own. She was one of the organizers of the Civil Defense Protest Committee. ROBERTS BLOSSOM (left), a prominent off-Broadway actor, was one of the 26 arrested. At bottom, NORMAN MAILER was a focus of attention among the protesters. Top photograph shows the Saturday picket line in front of Greenwich Village's Womens House of Detention.

Voice: Gin Briggs

Hundreds Risk Jail in Civil Defense Protest

City Hall Park and Greenwich Village last week were the scenes of two mass demonstrations. They proved that a considerable number of New Yorkers were prepared to engage in civil disobedience, or at least picket, to express their aversion to Civil Defense air-raid drills.

The first demonstration, at City Hall, was held to protest the nation-wide drill. The second, in front of the Women's House of Detention on Greenwich Avenue, sprung up as a protest against

the arrest of 26 people in the City Hall affair. In addition, hundreds of other New Yorkers were involved in similar acts of defiance in the form of picketing and college campus demonstrations throughout the city.

Useless Action

The drill was held at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, May 3. Prior to this, the Civil Defense Protest Committee announced that its members would not obey the drill order to take shelter. It did so on the grounds that such action is useless under hydrogen-bomb attack, and that such exercises only delude the public into a false sense of security.

The protesters were, for the most part, members of the Catholic Worker organization, the War Resisters League, Quakers, as well as mothers of young children, pacifists, Socialists, and a large scattering of rugged individuals.

On Tuesday, committee members and sympathizers crowded into the park in front of City Hall, in preparation for the drill. Each knew he was liable to arrest for refusing to take shelter. Novelists Norman Mailer and Kay Boyle, Dorothy Day and Ammon Hennacy of the Catholic Worker, Dwight Macdonald, and Socialists David McReynolds and the Reverend A. J. Muste were among the crowd. Mrs. Janice Smith, the mother of two, who sat out all by

Tocci Still in Race For Assembly Post

Insurgent Joseph Tocci's campaign to wrest the job of assemblyman for the First A.D. away from Tamawa regular, William Passannante, finally got into gear last week. Tocci filed a petition with approximately 800 names on it supporting his candidacy. His name will now appear on the June primary ballot, opposing both Passannante and Republican choice Gerald Ullman.

Tocci, a former member of the regular Tamawa Club led by Carmine G. DeSapio, first appeared as an insurgent a year ago in a fight to oust DeSapio as leader. He quickly withdrew however.

Early this week, Tocci commented he was continuing his activities in his race for the Assembly by use of posters and a sound truck. "We do not have anything near the kind of money our opposition has," he commented, "but we will do everything possible to bring my views to the public before the primary."

These ideas, he continued, are basically the same as when he first announced his insurgent candidacy nearly two months ago. They call for better leadership and more democratic leadership within the Democratic Party.

"I do not mean an official alliance," he said. "But I would like the opportunity to talk to a V.I.D. meeting and let them ask questions. I think because we both represent insurgent movements we can help each other in the common cause of defeating the Tamawa Club."

Tocci's headquarters is located at 270 Sixth Avenue.

VID Poll Indicates:

Stevenson Way Ahead

The political durability of Adlai Stevenson—at least in Greenwich Village—was dramatically pointed up in a political poll released this week by the Village Independent Democrats.

A sampling of registered Democrats in the First Assembly District South (Greenwich Village) indicates that the former Governor of Illinois is still top man for Democratic Presidential candidate with 47 per cent of the respondents. Senator John F. Kennedy trailed far behind with 23 per cent, while his antagonist, Senator Hubert Humphrey, was a weak third, drawing only 7 per cent of the vote.

The poll, conducted in April under VID auspices, took in approximately 10 per cent (939) of the Democratic voters. According to the VID, every tenth Democrat in the registration book, in four out of five election districts, was polled. Of the 10 individual districts not polled, two are in the south Village and the remainder scattered throughout the area.

Runners-Up

Besides the top contenders, Chester Bowles was the choice of 3 per cent, Senators Symington and Johnson of 2 per cent each. Fifteen per cent of those questioned were in the "Don't Know" category, and some 200 refused to answer.

With 14 per cent of the vote, Humphrey led the field in the "Second Choice" category, followed by Kennedy (12%), Bowles (8%), Stevenson (8%), Symington (8%), Johnson (4%), and Governor Robert Meyner (4%). A scattering of votes in this section of the poll were registered for Governors G. Mennen Williams and "Pat" Brown, former President Truman, and Senator Wayne Morse.



—Fred McDarrah



—Howard Smith

Continued on page 13

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Civil Defense Protest

Continued from page 1
herself last year, was also on the scene.

At first, something approximating a mass picnic atmosphere prevailed. The sun was warm, the park green with spring grass. Dwight Macdonald laughingly said, "I don't know whether I'll stay out or not. I wouldn't mind going to jail if they let me out in time to speak on anarchism at Yale tomorrow."

More Tense

As the 2:15 deadline approached however, and two police vans parked nearby, the crowd became more tense. Dozens of newspaper and newsfilm men showed up. So did a large force of policemen and women. At this point, about 80 protest mothers appeared bringing with them a squeaking brigade of children ranging from infants in carriages to those old enough to play games of tag. There was some question as to whether any of these mothers with children would be arrested.

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NEAR 8th AVENUE — CLOSED SUNDAYS

people marched at one time or another, although the picket line never exceeded 200 protesters. A random sampling by The Voice showed that over half the Saturday group had not been at City Hall. Many had become interested in the situation only after the sentencing.

"I'm no pacifist," one elderly, well-dressed woman commented as she marched along. "But I don't think this drill business is going to do an earthly bit of good. So I certainly don't think people should be arrested because of it."

David McReynolds later reiterated his belief that the Civil Defense law was dead, especially in view of the large turnout on Saturday. He stated that picketing of the Village prison would continue until early this week, by which time the protesters will have been released.

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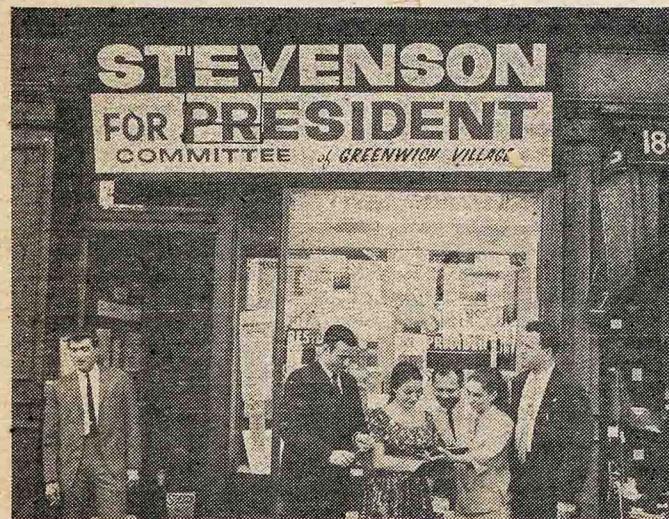
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the village Voice

Kill the Bigots!.....SEE DAVID McREYNOLDS IN
"THE PRESS OF FREEDOM"
PAGE 4

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Vol. V, No. 36 • New York, N.Y. • Thursday, June 30, 1960



UNDAUNTED by their candidate's failure to announce his candidacy, a Village group opened Stevenson headquarters last Friday on busy West 4th Street.

Voice: Gin Briggs

Save All! Villagers Tell Mayor

Mayor Wagner learned last Monday—if he did not already know—that the watchword of Greenwich Village is "Save." Save the housing, save the Square, save the coffee houses—Save the Village!

The Mayor was visiting his traveling complaint-and-information trailer, called by many the "gripemobile," at its present station near the intersection of Sixth and Greenwich Avenues. A large crowd, including many protesters of building demolitions and coffee-house closings, were on hand to voice questions, complaints, and downright gripes.

Urge Use of Law

Arnold Bergier, until only a few weeks ago a Villager, and both founder and president of the Save the Village Committee, urged the use of the 1956 Bard Law for saving the aesthetic and historic nature of the Village. His Honor told Bergier the suggestion would be acted upon promptly.

Then came the coffee-house element, representing the Cafe Bizarre and the Gaslight, two establishments recently closed for Fire Department violations. Wagner promised he would look into the case, but at the same time stated that the Fire Department wanted no repetition in New York of fire catastrophes which have struck other cities in recent years.

In the course of the Mayor's earnest deliberations with local figures, the voice of a girl, resident in the Women's House of Detention, came sailing onto the scene. "Why not come up here, honey?" she called out. It was like nothing happened.

The gripemobile-squawkmobile-questionmobile, staffed by city employees, will be at the service of Villagers through Friday afternoon.

Bizarre Alters, Opens— To Only 74 at a Time

The Cafe Bizarre, 106 West 3rd Street, one of the two Village coffee houses closed by the Fire Department for violations and as "fire hazards," reopened last week-end on a limited basis.

The Bizarre, whose clientele runs heavily to tourists, underwent alterations during the time it was closed, including the widening of aisles, new electrical equipment, and the addition of extra fire extinguishers.

The Fire Department formerly permitted the Bizarre a maximum of 200 persons; the present limit is 74. Rick Allmen, shop owner, hopes to have the maximum increased.

Polls Cheer Adlai Backers

In the wake of considerable evidence of grassroots support for their reluctant candidate, a group of Villagers have opened a Stevenson for President headquarters at 184 West 4th Street.

According to Melvin Kraft, chairman of the Village chapter—there are 27 in all throughout the state—the object of his group is "to encourage every registered voter, whatever his political affiliation, to sign a petition in favor of Stevenson's nomination."

Tops in Three

Despite an apparent Kennedy bandwagon operating among the delegates, Stevenson has emerged top-man in three local polls. The

latest, at the New Chelsea Democratic Club, where speakers for all major candidates made appearances, the twice-defeated Democrat won 93 per cent of the vote.

Earlier this month the Tilden Democratic Club (Gramercy Park) issued a report on a poll they had made which showed that Stevenson was the choice of 68 per cent of those canvassed. Kennedy followed with 15.5 per cent.

A more scientific poll, released in May by the Village Independent Democrats, covering about 10 per cent of all registered Democrats, gave Stevenson 47 per cent of the vote to Kennedy's 23 per cent.

Westergaard Blast Draws Lib Fire, Call Him 'Tammany'

Democrat John Westergaard's accusations of last week that the Liberal Party had not endorsed his candidacy for the State Senate because of "deals" between Republican and Tammany Hall elements drew quick Liberal fire this week.

The Liberal Party, which commonly backs Democrats, ended its own candidate, Leon Braun, an attorney, to vie for election with Westergaard and the Republican incumbent, State Senator MacNeil Mitchell. The Liberal entry is expected to have the effect of drawing-off votes from the Democratic line. Westergaard also said in his strongly-worded statement that Liberal leaders had expressed scorn for reformist elements in New York politics.

No Deals'

In answering the charges, Leona Finestone and Ed Doremus, Liberal Party officials from this area, flatly denied that they had any knowledge of "deals" to thwart Westergaard.

In a joint statement, they said: "Westergaard, at the age of 27, is without experience or skill, has

no political ideas of his own, and has no concept of the needs of the community. He just doesn't seem to understand that these are among the principle reasons why we cannot endorse him."

The Liberal officials brushed aside his charge that their party leaders were hostile to the reform movement in the Democratic Party. They called his statement "a transparent attempt to identify himself with the insurgent group."

"Westergaard is actually a Tammany candidate," they said. "Until after the June 7 primary he kept discreetly silent on insurgent issues."

The Liberal spokesmen characterized Braun, their own candidate, a "mature and prominent attorney" and the active chairman of the lawyers' committee of Save the Village.

Senator Mitchell had no comment to make on the charges.



Voice: Gin Briggs

MUSICAL STANDOUT of last Saturday's Greenwich Village "Salute to Summer" parade was the kilted bagpipe Sacred Heart Band from the suburbs of Yonkers. Another popular feature of the day was a stoic bevy of Locomobiles, Franklins, and other antiques, led by a heroic 35-year-old BMW.

Martin Schulman:

Realtor Retreats From Demand For Eviction

by Ken Sobol

Martin Schulman, a "buy and evict" landlord, last week offered to compromise differences with a group of aroused south Village tenants and allow them to remain in their present homes.

Schulman's method of operation in the Village has been to buy up properties and then apply to the Rent Commission for permission to evict the tenants on the basis of plans to remodel. There are strings of such eviction proceedings now in the works.

The compromise was made in connection with Schulman's 40-42 MacDougal Street property at a hearing on Friday morning before Joseph Goldberg, Lower Manhattan rent administrator. The landlord's offer was dubbed "reasonable" by his lawyers, a view apparently shared by Goldberg and most of those present, with the enraged exception of one of the three attorneys for the tenants, Carl Hauptman.

'Off the Hook'

Hauptman, a representative of Save the Village, insisted that the compromise was a means of "letting Schulman off the hook." His stand was later backed up by another leading member of Save

the Village who bitterly remarked that the case against Schulman "should be publicly aired, not compromised."

Midway through the Friday-morning session, the lawyers for the landlord, Jack Newton Lerner and Hyman I. Luster, proposed the compromise to spare their client cross-examination.

The proposal promised abandonment of plans to demolish the MacDougal Street buildings. *Continued on page 2*

Next Week: Norman Mailer

We have heard from Norman Mailer in Provincetown that the story in the New York Post about his fracas with the Provincetown police is all wrong, and he has promised to send us a letter about the event for the next issue.

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the village **Voice****The Newport Blues—Bob Reisner, p. 2**

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Vol. V, No. 37

New York, N. Y.

Thursday, July 7, 1960

Feiffer**15 Sheridan Square:****Landlord Defies Order to Remove Demolition Signs**

Embattled landlord Martin Schulman suffered another defeat last week in his fight to demolish the apartment house he owns at 15 Sheridan Square, when the Rent Commission ordered him to remove a giant sign and window crosses at the front of the building.

Housing Clinic Sets New Summer Schedule
 During the summer months the Greenwich Village Association's housing clinic will be open on Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 9 p. m. at Greenwich House, 27 Barrow Street. In case of emergency the clinic may be reached by calling GR 5-8900.

The housing clinic offers advice to persons having problems dealing with evictions, rent control, building violations, relocation, etc.

From Norman Mailer

The letter I had written from Provincetown to The Voice concerned the New York Post, and so as a courtesy I sent a copy to James Wechsler. To my surprise the Post printed the piece last week-end, an act for which I think they are to be congratulated since the piece was most critical of the Post. There seems now to be little point to reprinting my letter in The Voice.

—Norman Mailer

Square Dances In Square

Piute Pete, well-known caller, and his Country Cousins will be featured again this year in four evenings of square dances in Washington Square Park. The dances will be held on each Thursday evening in July at 8 p.m.

The first program will be on July 7, and has been dubbed "Singing Squares Night." The second evening, July 14, is "American Play Party Night," featuring circle dancers.

The West Side Savings Bank is the sponsor of the series.

6000 Sign for Stevenson

The Village branch of the Stevenson for President Committee claims that it has been collecting signatures for the former Presidential nominee at the rate of more than 1000 a day.

Swimming, Anyone?

The west Village's city-run outdoor swimming pool is now open to the public seven days a week. The pool's Monday to Friday schedule is from 1 to 8 p.m. On weekends the hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. The pool is located at Seventh Avenue South and Carmine Street. The charge for swimming is 25¢.

Shep at Rallye Here

Jean Shepherd will once again oversee the annual Village Voice summer rallye as he has done since the first rallye in 1957.

The 4th annual sports car rallye will be co-sponsored by the Greenwich Village Motor Sports Club and will start from

Schneider Returns To 'Sq.' Concerts

Alexander Schneider, famed violinist-conductor, will be back this summer conducting the chamber music concerts in Washington Square, after an absence of five years.

Schneider, who, in 1952, helped launch the series, severed his connection with the organizers of the concerts in 1955 over what he claimed was a failure to consult with him on plans for that year's series.

In the interim he has acted as conductor and director of the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico, and has also been the regular conductor of the New School's chamber music series.

This year's initial concert will be held on Monday, August 1. In contrast to the small string ensemble he directed eight years ago, Schneider will lead a 34-piece group. The first program will include works by Haydn, Mozart, and Vivaldi.

Washington Square Park East on Sunday, July 10 at 10 a. m. The rallye has been planned by the club's president, Bob Plumer.

There will be trophies for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Dead Last positions, as well as a drink on the house at Stephen's (where everyone is to gather for the results after the rallye) for the craziest costume and the craziest navigational instrument. There will also be a case of beer for the team which collects the best poker hand while running the course (details at the rallye).

This form is for drivers who wish to participate in the fourth annual Greenwich Village foreign and sports car rallye. Fill out this blank and bring it to the point-of-assembly, Washington Square East and Washington Place, at 10 a. m. on Sunday, July 10. Prior to the week-end, these blanks may be brought or mailed directly to The Village Voice, 22 Greenwich Avenue, NYC 11.

Driver: _____
 Address: _____
 Navigator: _____
 Address: _____

Make of Vehicle: _____
 Club affiliation, if any: _____

Lic. #: _____
 Registration fee of \$2 should accompany this blank.

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the village **Voice****Mailer Writes to JFK & Fidel Castro**

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**AN OPEN LETTER TO
JFK AND CASTRO**

Dear Jack:

Back in a certain nice Summer before a long Fall, I wrote an essay for one of our large garish national magazines about the Democratic Convention, the city of Los Angeles, and John Fitzgerald Kennedy. In that piece, I may have made the error of sailing against the stereotype that you were a calculating untried over-ambitious and probably undeserving young stud who came from a very wealthy and much unloved family.

I took a hard skimming tack against the wind of that probability and ventured instead into the notion that you gave promise of becoming the first major American hero in more than a decade. I also upheld the private hope that you were—dare I use the word, it has become so abused—that you were Hip, that your sense of history was subtle because it extracted as much from flesh as fact. Finally, I suggested that America's mutilated vision of a renaissance might find new and necessary life in that inevitably romantic and rather royal image you and your wife would furnish all us minor-league soap operas with our malnourished electronic psyches.

Made the Club

Obviously, I hoped you would get in. I did my best to help you. I wrote 13,000 words of rich chocolate prose to balm the flaccid hearts of all those sick little Democrats I know, and I think I even made the club. I may be one of the 5000 charter members who can boast that: Jack would not have gotten in without me. Of course Jim Farley, Jake Arvey, Lyn Johnson, J. Edgar, and even old Dick Nix (America can't stand pat) also figure they made the real difference in your 100,000 votes. But blow it. I don't know that my Narcissism is kept tasty any longer by being part of the club. I don't get much pleasure in saying this, but I think you are beginning to act a little like all bad hippies—responsibility is turning you to plumber's lead.

I mean: Wasn't there anyone around to give you the lecture on Cuba? Don't you sense the enormity of your mistake—you invade a country without understanding its music.

You listen to intelligence agents and fail to interpret the style of the prose in which they submit their reports. You, with your shrewd sense of character, neglect to see that none of your boys and men can tell you the truth about Cuba because it would flagellate them too psychically to consider the existential (that is, indescribable) quality of what they report. So they turn nuances into

facts, and lose other nuances, and mangle facts into falsities. It keeps you perhaps from recognizing what all the world knows, that we have driven Cuba inch by inch to alliance with the Soviet, as deliberately and insanely as a man setting out to cuckold himself.

Last Fall

But allow me to offer you an unsolicited guide. Six months ago I intended to run for Mayor of New York. I planned to publish an open letter to Fidel Castro as the first rocket in the campaign. Through October and the beginning of November, I worked at the letter, polished it here, cut it there. Then a rocket went off in a direction I had not anticipated and I smashed a thousand pieces in people around me. That letter is one of the broken pieces. It made no sense to publish it any longer since I had lost the right to use my name in any happy way.

Now, however, you come to my aid. It occurs to me that that prose, now half a year old, will help you to understand Cuba no less well than you have managed to do so far on the basis of those marvelous reports which come in from your Mr. Allen Dulles. I mean: think of all the studs and girly-goos in CIA who held hands and toes and told each other the invasion was bound to succeed. Success, America!

**The Letter
To Castro**

Dear Fidel Castro:

I have said nothing in public about you or your country since I signed a statement last year in company with Baldwin, Capote, Sartre, and Tynan that we believe in "Fair Play for Cuba." But now I am old enough to believe that one must be ready to be faithful to one's truth. So, Fidel Castro, I announce to the City of New York that you gave all of us who are alone in this country, and usually not speaking to one another, some sense that there were heroes left in the world. One felt life in one's cold over-argued blood as one picked up in our newspapers the details of your voyage.

But I go too fast. Since this is an open letter, and thus meant for the people of New York as much as for you, I suppose I must write

Continued on page 14

**Voice Given
Polk Plaque**

The Village Voice was given the George Polk Memorial Award on April 19 for serving "the intellectual and community aspirations" of a Greenwich Village which is "the home of the arts, of professional people, the wealthy, and the rebellious."

Other recipients were James Morris (The Manchester Guardian), John T. Cunniff (Associated Press), William R. Clark and Alexander Milch (Newark News), Albert Wasserman and Robert Young (National Broadcasting Company), Yasushi Nagao (Mainichi, Tokyo-UPI), and Douglass Cater (The Reporter).

**Lindsay Pushes
Federal Role in
Addiction Fight**

Republican Congressman John V. Lindsay this week introduced a three-part bill that would give the Federal government a large role in coping with the narcotics-addiction problem. Similar bills have been introduced into the Upper House by New York Senators Javits and Keating.

The first Lindsay bill calls for the establishment of new Federal-State programs for the construction of narcotics hospital facilities. Funds are to be allocated in proportion to the state's share of narcotics users. To be eligible for assistance the state must set up an adequate after-care program for released addicts.

The second Lindsay bill provides for the civil commitment of drug users. Its purpose is to permit mandatory commitment, treatment, and after-care supervision of addicts. These actions would be of a civil nature and not deemed criminal.

In his remarks to the House, Mr. Lindsay pointed out that New York City has some 45 per cent of the nation's known addicts and that the dominant approach to date has been to treat them as criminals.

**Civil Defense Protest
At City Hall**

The Civil Defense Protest Committee will again this year meet in City Hall Park. An outdoor demonstration will be held on Friday, April 28, at 3:30 p. m. An alert will be sounded at 4 p. m. when all New Yorkers are expected to take cover. A number of the protesters plan to defy the authorities and not seek shelter, as was done last year.



Voice: Gin Brigg

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR MORE BUSES. The Park Department's fury at the folk-singers' spending four hours on the concrete of Washington Square Park each week has not carried over to the buses. No amount of urging on the part of local people has stimulated Parks Commissioner Newbold Morris to stop the bus company from using the Square as a garage in violation of its promise.

Music Hath No Charm for Planning Board**Morris Ban on Singers
In Sq. Divides Village**

by Mary Perot Nichols

The division in Greenwich Village over folk-singing in Washington Square Park was set in sharp focus last Thursday night at a meeting of the Borough President's Local Planning Board.

The unique character of the Village became quickly evident at the Board session where support for the folk-singers—often characterized by their opponents as disreputable—came mostly from people who own their own homes or live in high-rent apartments around the Washington Square area. This group generally has strong feelings about the Village retaining flavor and variety.

Forming the nucleus of the opposition to the singers was the settled old Italian-American community, which has its base in the low-rent tenements of the South Village. Actually, both the folk-singers and the tenements are believed to be targets for elimination by realtors in their drive to upgrade Greenwich Village.

Bitter Meeting

In an executive session, which followed a bitter open meeting, the board voted 19 to 6 to support the ban on folk-singers in the Square promulgated by Parks Commissioner Newbold Morris.

The most violent debate of the evening swirled around charges and denials that the underlying

**Renewal Opponents
To City Hall Today**

Mrs. Jane Jacobs, head of Save the West Village Committee, is urging opponents of the West Village Urban Renewal proposal to appear en masse at the Board of Estimate today (Thursday).

The Board, which meets at City Hall at 10 a. m., is expected to refer the proposal back to the City Planning Commission. The Commission will then hold a public hearing.

AN OPEN LETTER TO JFK AND CASTRO

Continued from page 1

first of events with which you are more than familiar.

Back in December, 1956, you landed near Niquero in the Oriente of Cuba with 82 men and a few arms. Your plan was to ignite an insurrection which would rid Cuba of Batista in a few weeks. Instead, you were to lose all but 12 of these men in the first few days, you were to wander through fields and forests in the dark, without real food or water, living on sugar-cane for five days and five nights. In the depth of this disaster, you were to announce to the few men still with you: "The days of the dictatorship are numbered."

"This man is crazy," one of them admits he said to himself.

More Than a Symbol

It took you more than 20 days to reach the summit of the Pico Turquino, the high peak in Cuba, high in the Sierra Maestra. You reached it on Christmas Eve. There you stayed for two years. For much of that time you were no more than a symbol.

Through Cuba passed the word that 12 men lived on a mountain top, 12 men who had sworn to destroy the tyranny. It was incredible. What that token of resistance came to signify! Day after day, month by month, grew a spirit of rebellion in Cuba.

As the underground developed, so developed Batista's methods of torture, his excesses, his murders, his uncountable atrocities, at last so open and so foul that he ended by alienating some of the wealthy, the well-born, the best of his own support.

For those two years your army discovered itself; your skill as a military leader developed art, your diplomatic talents untied the complexities of an underground choking with factions and old feuds.

You survived skirmishes, negotiations, and battles; you suffered a major defeat, and recovered quickly enough to hold off 14 battalions of Batista's army with no more than 300 of your own men, you came at last out of the hills to defeat an army of 30,000 professional soldiers. Two years and a month after the disaster of your landing, you were able to enter Havana in triumph.

It was not unheroic. Truth, it was worthy of Cortes.

It was as if the ghost of Cortes had appeared in our century riding Zapata's white horse. You were the first and greatest hero to appear in the world since the Second War.

Better than that, you had a face. One had friends with faces like yours. In silence, many of us gave you our support. In silence. We did not have an organization to address you, we talked very little about you, we said: "Castro, good guy," and let it go, but all the while you were giving us the idea that everything was not hopeless. There has been a new spirit in America since you entered Havana. I think you must be given credit for some part of a new and better mood which has been coming to America.

Bitter Memory

Now, you did not feel friendly to my country when you had won your war. There was the bitter memory of our Ambassadors, Mr. Gardner and Mr. Smith, and the photographs they took all too often with Batista and his friends; there was the recollection of the American rockets which had been sold to the Cuban government at a time when Batista's Air Force was

burning the huts of peasants in your hills; there were the headlines in Cuban newspapers: DULLES TOASTS BATISTA which appeared the day before Batista held his last false election. You must have wondered why Dulles had chosen that particular day to visit Ambassador Arroyo at the Cuban Embassy in Washington. You may even have wondered why our newspapers chose to print so many of Batista's stories that you were Communist.

Still the situation was not very bad. Much of our press gave you good treatment here, and some of our largest newspapers and magazines welcomed your victory. A general wave of congratulation passed through our mass-media. For a few days, you were popular in America.

Then you had your public executions. I suppose tragedy cannot exist without irony. If Batista's people had just been shot, all 500 of them, shot in their homes, their bars, the automobiles in which they were fleeing, our newspapers would have complained a bit, but it would have been attributed to the excesses of a victorious army, a retaliation in kind upon Batista's assassins.

You, however, were interested in justice, in proclamation, in propaganda—you were saying to the people of Cuba: "I am not a bandit like the ones who come before me, I am the leader of a revolution—I execute the torturers of the past before the eyes of the present."

Rage and Terror

Our newspapers erupted against you. They used the executions to condemn everything in your regime. One would have thought you were almost a successor to Adolf Hitler the way they excoriated you because 500 Batistas were condemned to death in trials of public spectacle, 500 cut-throats who had maimed the heads, crushed the hearts, and disfigured the genitalia of your men and your women. The worst of our newspapers screamed with rage and terror. As if you were killing them.

And you were. Like Bolivar, you were sending the wind of new rebellion to our lungs. You were making it possible for us to breathe again. You were aiding our war.

But then, I do not know if you can understand our war here.

In Cuba, hatred runs over into the love of blood; in America all too few blows are struck into flesh. We kill the spirit here, we are experts at that. We use psychic bullets and kill each other cell by cell.

We live in a country very different from Cuba. We have had a tyranny here, but it did not have the features of Batista; it was a tyranny one breathed but could not define; it was felt as no more than a slow deadening of the best of our possibilities, a tension we could not name which was the sum of our frustrations. We all knew that the best of us used up our memories in long nights of drinking, exhausted our vision in secret journeys of the mind; our more stable men and women of some little good will watched the years go by—

their idealism sank into apathy. By law we had a free press; almost no one spoke his thoughts. By custom we had a free ballot; was there ever a choice? We were a league of silent defeated men who could not even assent on which were the true battles we lost. In silence we gave you our support. You were aiding us, you were giving us psychic ammunition, you were aiding us in that desperate silent strug-

gle we have been fighting with sick dead hearts against the cold insidious cancer of the power that governs us, you were giving us new blood to fight our mass communications, our police, our secret police, our corporations, our empty politicians, our clergymen, our editors, our cold frightened bewildered bullies who govern a machine made out of people they no longer understand, you were giving us hope they would not always win.

That Is Why

That is why America persecuted you. That is why our newspapers made their subtle distortions, lied about your accomplishments, put dirt on your name, wrote in a prose of cheap glow that you were sick and would certainly die in a few months, and were even more furious when somehow you did not die, and no power agreeable to America arose in Cuba to steal your power. That is why they mocked your speech at the U. N.

They had reported you were very ill: it did not vouch well for their reliability that now you spoke for four and a half hours. How can anyone talk that long they say now and giggle nervously. He must be a compulsive, they say. They do not admit to themselves that no one here in this country dares to talk for more than four and a half minutes they are so afraid they will give themselves away.

Now, at the moment, revolted by the cheap muck of the most cels-filled brains in our land, disheartened by the impossibility of receiving a fair report from us, you are obviously getting ready to commit your political fortune to Khrushchev. I do not know the complexities of the situation. Maybe no one does. We hear everything here. We hear that you are committed completely to the Russians, we hear that you are still your own man. The combinations offered are endless. What worries us is that the facts are too many to be able to know what one reads.

Background

Norman Mailer's letter to Fidel Castro was submitted this week to the New York Post, the Herald Tribune, and the Times, and was not printed by any of them.

The letter to Kennedy was written especially for this issue of *The Village Voice*.

I would guess you were not ever a Communist, that you are not now—you have always had too much of a private vision to be Communist—I would speculate of you, sir, that you came to power ready to make a revolution which could give more of what is noble to the people. You were simply bewildered when the American press turned on you. Then it was I would guess that you began to give the Communists your ear. What an argument they had now. "Look," they must have said, "why believe America's lies about the Communists, why believe them when you see how they lie about you?"

Everyone Lies

Well, we lie about the Communists. They lie as well. We deaden the life of millions by hypocrisy and go on to claim we are the hope of civilization; they liquidate the life of millions and argue they are the imagination of the future.

Of course it may not be agreeable to listen to this now. You have a new friend. He was good to you at a time when my country promulgated its disgrace. You are Latin. Your honor is to be loyal. Still, I must say that as one of your sympathizers I do not trust your new friend. He is a wise peasant bully. Yet an intellectual

should not forget that he came to power because of one exceptional ability: he was able to live as a flea in the stumpy tail of a wild old bear named Josef Stalin; this old bear was notorious for eating his tail. At the end Khrushchev was the only flea left who had strength. Perhaps he was the flea closest to the root. Since then he has grown big as a man.

Of course you may not like these words about Khrushchev. At a time when our large newspapers were writing like small-town gossips about the condition in which you left your rooms in one of our New York hotels (what do the same rooms look like after a convention of American salesmen have left, you must have wondered), at a time when you could not make a move in our city without being able to read the next day in the newspapers about it as an act sinister or foolish, Khrushchev had the genius to kiss you on the cheek for our photographers, and so restore your honor.

He has good manners, that man—I suppose a part of you will like him forever because of his embrace that day. But revolutionaries are different from Communists, and a kiss from one is not the same as a kiss from the other. Khrushchev kissed many before you, and he has signed the papers which removed them forever. He is a Commissar—they like to kiss. But Commissars never made a revolution.

So Khrushchev will never be able to understand that you are serious. He will think he is a realist, and you are an actor. Realists endure, goes the logic of Khrushchev, actors can be replaced. Khrushchev will never understand that when no personal authority exists in a leader, a country sinks into the authority of public relations—it has a vacuum at its center. Khrushchev will never understand that Cuba does not have its strength because the Communists give you arms but because so many of the people still believe in you, they cry out for you to cover yourself when you speak in the rain.

Plain Words

Look! Plain words. I hear from the source of a source that the situation is bad in your country now. I hear Communists control Cuba and shut you into the psychic prison of their encirclement, I hear they manipulate you to say the things which will most irritate our press into striking back in the way which will most irritate you. By every step of this logic you distrust your new friends less, hate America more, and thus begin to prepare yourself for a war you may even begin to desire as a sedative to personal madness, so great is your rage at the monuments of *mierda* laid upon the cross of your expedition down from the peak into the city, so great is your anguish at the filth you must breathe to keep alive the simple idea of the mountain air: one must free the people and give them life. This is what I hear. I do not want to believe it, but I can no longer ignore what I hear, because my private sources are people still sympathetic to Cuba and to you. They go on to declare that the Communists want America to attack. Their hope—so goes the argument of my source—is that America will be incited by you to invade Cuba, create a new Korea, and alienate the people of Latin and South America forever.

As a Communist strategy it is excellent. Of course Cuba will lose another 58 years. But the Communists are used to considering small nations expendable—it is part of their pride that they will sacrifice their followers.

It is not so difficult for them. In the other country they do not kill

people—they liquidate. Certain people become fascinating, they are too rich in their private time—the State does not care to afford them. They disappear. Friends do not even know if they are dead—one cannot hold a funeral in their memory. One knows just that it is better not to talk about the missing friend. A new shame chases the other. Remembrance of the past turns to fog.

Through Too Much

Fidel, is this what you wish for Cuba, for your Cuba which is so alive? I cannot believe it. Your people went through a little too much. They are not statistics. You cannot want them to talk like machines of the state in the new Cuba. You cannot. You must play for power, not commit yourself to it. So do not give up on my country too quickly.

I know it is a bad place, I know well how bad it is, I know millions will be squeezed out of existence here in the center of prosperity, stricken by the deadness of a life which can find no love. Yet one thing will be said for my country. They allow me to speak my mind in a way I never could in the other country. You who are a poet will know this is a freedom some of us do not want to live without.

Besides, in my country, it is possible the people are better than their government: they could come to understand you if you would think of how to speak to us.

I do not expect the way is to listen to your present advisers. You would do better to hire a public-relations man from our Madison Ave. They are corrupt, our men of Madison, so corrupt they will work as well for you as for the corporation. Fact, they will work better. By now, they hate our country more than you could, they know it better.

A Proposal

Bad humor. Forgive it. I have a proposal. Address an open letter in your name to Ernest Hemingway. Many would say—I am one of them—that he has been our greatest writer. It is certain he created my generation—he told us to be brave in a bad world and to be ready to die alone.

Actually he is afraid of our country. He is a very brave old man, I believe, but he does not have a cancer-detector, so he stays away from us, from our smog-ridden, atom-haunted city. He prefers Cuba, as doubtless you know. He has lived there off and on for 20 years. He no longer writes to us. Maybe a letter once in a while. We do not talk about him any longer. Some of us are bitter about him. We feel he has deserted us and produced no work good enough to justify his silence.

There are many of us who will curse his memory if he dies in silence.

So do the old man a favor. Send him an invitation to come back to Cuba, at his own expense or at yours. He may not want to come. He has his work to do, he has a big book on which he has been working for 15 years. If this work is going well it would be an excessive sacrifice for him to interrupt it. But, then, he may not mind an interruption. In the past 15 years he has interrupted his work many times to write about other things. He may come to see that it would not be so very bad to write about you. If he agrees, it is your duty to those of us who care about your fate to let him tell the world whether he likes what is happening with you or not.

Show the world that you will let a Nobel Prize writer who speaks the language of the country travel anywhere in your territory, unmolested, unobstructed, unindoc-

Continued on page 15

AN OPEN LETTER TO JFK AND CASTRO

Continued from page 14

trinated. Let him come, let him get to know you if he wishes, hope that he will write something about Cuba, a paragraph, a line, a poem, a statement—whatever he says cannot be ignored in my country. The world will read what Hemingway has to say, the world will read it critically, because he will be making a history, he may even be preparing a ground on which you and our new President can meet.

Whether our new President is a good man, I do not know. I had no sense of his moral being the two brief times I talked to him. One had the impression he is a brave man and a complicated man, and he has intelligence. But I thought he had a taint I could not name. It is not an interesting taint, evil, decadent, or extraordinary, it was more a sense that he was dead and dull in little places where some of us are still alive. It is possible he does not understand or is lacking some of the necessary and vital emotions of most people.

I think it is not impossible he will become a great President, but I also think he could lead us into dictatorship. It is not only up to him, but to many of us, whether he becomes a good leader or a bad one. The question is whether he has a mind deep enough to comprehend the size of the disaster he has inherited here.

If America had a mind and one could stare into it, the landscape of our psyche might be bleak, gutted, scorched by 15 years of mindless government, all nerves withered by the management of men who were moral poltroons. Many of us have hope that Kennedy will help our national mind to see again, but of course one does not know. One does not want to hope too soon. I think Kennedy's statements on Cuba during the election campaign were ugly. They took away the enthusiasm one felt in voting for him. Still, one voted. It was the first time one voted in 12 years. It seemed self-evident he was superior to the other. You could not talk to the other. I think you could talk to our new President, I think he might come to recognize that if a man of Hemingway's age was willing to give up some important moment of his time to write new words about your country, that the culture of the world—that culture existing in every cultivated mind—would be judging Kennedy if he did not respond or react to Hemingway's view (whatever it might be) of your country. And Kennedy wishes to be considered a great man in the cultivated verdicts of history.

A Third Way

So respond to this letter, Fidel. There is value in it for you. If we get no word, it will come to mean that you care no longer about those who want to believe in you, it will come to mean that you have lost interest in all but your hatred of America. So you will then give strength to our enemies here; they will delight in your silence and your hatred.

But I do not know that you will give them such pleasure. You may still believe in that larger part of the world which endures in the possibility that neither the United States nor Russia will triumph, that there is a third way, that futures are not built nor civilizations kept alive by super-states, but that it is rather people who make history, people more brave, more talented, or more generous than there was any reason to be. You belong not to the United

States nor to the Russians but to We of the Third Force. So long as you exist and belong neither to America nor to Russia, you give a bit of life to the best and most passionate men and women all over the earth, you are the answer to the argument of Commissars and Statesmen that revolutions cannot last, that they turn corrupt or total or eat their own. You are the one who can show the world that a revolutionary belongs to no one, that his actions cannot be predicted because he is possessed by a vision: he knows the world must grow better at a breathless rate or there will be no mankind. Just super-states, endless machines, and empty men who flee the night in all terror of eternity.

Still your brother,
Norman Mailer

Mr. President, I could say that letter to Fidel Castro makes me sad, because it might have accomplished a little, and did not have its chance. But, indeed, what chance? While the letter was being written we were training invasion armies in Florida and Texas and Guatemala and the Keys and other points and holes of the Caribbean. In the Herald Tribune of Tuesday, April 25, 1961, we read that:

New information was revealed about Mr. Nixon's role in urging the Eisenhower Administration to act against Cuba. After Castro visited Washington in 1959, Mr. Nixon proposed in a memorandum that the United States help anti-Castro Cubans overthrow the regime. The State Department was divided and within the Administration Mr. Nixon was in a minority for a year. By March 1960, however, his view prevailed and the program for training anti-Castro forces was begun.

What a pity Nixon was not elected. If he had invaded Cuba, half of America would have cheered at our defeat. Yes, you are a danger, Jack. You occupy the center like no Republican ever could.

No letter, no argument could have turned this issue. When one holds an invasion army whose roots are in United Fruit and the Commissars of Decency, one must use that army, or there is no peace for the authority.

So the test was made. The authority used its army. What America claimed was the truth of Cuba would now be observable as a working hypothesis: if Cuba was a miserable land seething with hatred of its leaders, such invasion would fire its own success.

Now, as gentlemen, we ought to obey the logic of our failure, face into the mirror of our tragedy and our comedy. Do we now see that we bent over and beseeched the Soviet Union to drive a spike into our bottom? Do we agree it may now be said by history that the Kennedy invasion of Cuba in 1961 put Communism permanently on the shores of Latin and South America? Their flag was planted in the Bahia de Cochinos, that Bay of Pigs our Intelligence chose for a landing.

Habits of Lying

Sad. A nation as large as ours, blinded by the lies of the men who feed us our news. With the best intention in the world, our reporters and our secret agents cannot tell the truth any longer, their habits for lying have grown so profound the lie shines with the clarity of a truth.

It may be that now there is only one answer left for us in Cuba. It is to begin again. Begin again. Take our hat in our hands and say we were wrong. We have been wrong for 58 years.

We do not expect you, Cuba, to trust us in a hurry, but we ask you to consider the possibility of

forgiving us. We will no longer try to destroy your revolution. We recognize that we cannot win this way, we will merely have a war between Soviet tanks and planes and American tanks and planes, and Cuba will be destroyed, and our name will be loathed throughout the Western Hemisphere.

No, we will admit that we were wrong, that maybe we were criminally wrong to try to win Cuba by invasion. So now we ask you to believe that we can see our error, and that we want, yes, you will not believe us, but humbly we wish to fight with Russia in Cuba.

As Liberties

Not with guns, not even with ideas (because the ideas of democracies are too subtle and existential to war polemically with the clanking jargons of the total mind) but as styles. As liberties. We do it because we cannot leave you alone with Russia, lost to what we can offer. There is one way in which we are a greater nation than Russia. Our creative artists are greater. Our writers, our poets, our painters, our jazz musicians. We have a life in all our private arts which they do not possess.

Cuba, you can flourish more with the arts of our best styles than with theirs. So we will help you with your economy and pay the price of having tried first to injure it, and we will play the long slow stubborn painful game of winning your neutrality back from the Russians. Yes, we accept your revolution with all the political cess we will have to pay at home to those cess-filled centers where our Commissars of Decency prevail. We know that is the price we have to pay for the brutally stupid errors we have made and the fear we have had of Cuba's tropic air. But we do it, because we still wish to become a great nation. Only a nation so dedicated would dare to admit its mistake.

Will we say that, Jack?

In the pig's hole we will. You've cut the shape of your plan for history, and it smells. It smells rich and smug and scared of the power of the worst, dullest, and most oppressive men of our land.

You will use brains but fear minds, seek for experts and eschew spirit, look for force and sap courage, promise sex and dull beauty. You will increase the power of this country and use up its marrow.

You are a virtuoso in political management but you will never understand the revolutionary passion which comes to those who were one way or another too poor to learn how good they might have been; the greediness of the rich had already crippled their youth.

Without this understanding you will never know what to do about Castro and Cuba. You will never understand that the man is the country, revolutionary, tyrannical, brilliant, extraordinary, hysterical, violent, passionate, brave as the best of animals, doomed perhaps to end in tragedy, but one of the great figures of the twentieth century, at the present moment a far greater figure than yourself.

Jack, if all your soldiers were saints you could not take Cuba, because your soldiers would arrive in the name of our land, and to the peasant of Cuba, Castro is now God and we in America are the Devil. Do you propose to get around that by putting higher I. Q.s into the seersuckers of the Central Intelligence Agency?

No, commander. You are in trouble. Your best troops now fear you are not deep enough to direct the destinies of our lives. And if you are not, the country will deaden a little more, even as it increases in its fevers, and the imagination of the best will begin to hard-

en into the separate undergrounds of a new Left and a new Right, ready to war against the oppressive, flatulent, and totalitarian center of our beleaguered land.

Do not hold to that center, Jack, it is a pusillanimous sludge of liberal and conservative bankruptcies, a pus of old jargons which will whip into no militant history, but may be analyzed eventually by the chemists as the ingredient which smudges the ink on such mothers of the center as the N. Y. Post.

Your near-contemporary,

N. M.

P. S. I was in a demonstration the other day of five literary magazines (so help me) which marched in a small circle of protest against our intervention in Cuba. One of the pickets was a very tall poetess with black hair which reached near to her waist. She was dressed like a medieval varlet, and she carried a sign addressed to your wife:

JACQUELINE, VOUS AVEZ
PERDU VOS ARTISTES

Tin soldier, you are depriving us of the Muse.

Spring Charity Bazaar

A spring bazaar will be held by the Marianite Sisters of the Holy Cross, the nuns who are nurses at the French Hospital, on Sunday afternoon, April 30, at St. John's Auditorium, 211 West 30th Street. Admission is free.

Proceeds from the bazaar will be used to benefit the order's home for convalescent and aged Sisters at Princeton, New Jersey.

Judges Picked for Ball

Plans for the forthcoming Fantasmagoria Ball at the Village Gate moved ahead this week as the celebration committee announced the names of those who have been invited to act as judges to elect "Miss Fantasmagoria." Among those invited are Henry Morgan, Julie Wilson, Bob Sylvester, Frank Farrell, Leo Schull, Sam Kramer, and Tallulah Bankhead. The ball will be held Monday night, May 22.

Art Workshop Outdoors

A painting workshop for children and adults will be held in an outdoor garden on Barrow Street during June and July. Fleur Bullock will instruct students in drawing, oil, gouache, watercolor, and woodblock. For information, call OR 5-8683.

Artist Wins \$2000 Grant

Joseph Solman, a Village artist, has been named the recipient of a \$2000 grant from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. The murals at the Jade Cockatoo Restaurant, 1 University Place, are the work of the artist.



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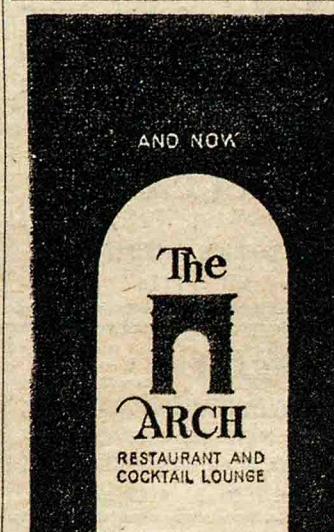
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